



EXHIBIT 1
DATE 3/16/13
SB 360

Addictions Consulting Group

Positioning Organizations for Tomorrow

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SENATE BILL 360

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am testifying in opposition to this bill. In 1975, we decriminalized alcoholism in Montana and officially recognized that alcoholism is a disease to be treated and not punished. Unfortunately, SB 360 is reversing that legislation with SB 360 and seeks to have persons who are publicly intoxicated incarcerated.

This bill lacks sufficient definitions. It does not make it clear who an alcoholic is. In fact it could be construed to mean any person who appears publicly and is intoxicated. It is quite likely to create confusion at best and at worst, it is a gross mis-use of our overcrowded jails.

We continue to have deaths in our jails of individuals who are incarcerated while under the influence of alcohol and subsequently progress into life-threatening and too often fatal alcohol withdrawal. It is inappropriate to put this liability on our jail system and ultimately the tax payer. These folks belong in detoxification facilities where there is medical oversight.

Regardless of how distasteful we may find public inebriates, let's not turn the clock back and put people at risk.

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